

Introduced by Senators Wiggins and Strickland

February 27, 2009

An act to add Section 2853 to the Public Utilities Code, relating to energy.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 542, as introduced, Wiggins. Solar energy and energy efficiency programs.

Under existing law, the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has regulatory authority over public utilities, including electrical corporations, as defined. A decision of the PUC adopted the California Solar Initiative. Existing law requires the PUC to undertake certain steps in implementing the California Solar Initiative. Existing law establishes a surcharge on all natural gas consumed in the state and upon electricity distributed by the state's three largest electrical corporations, to fund certain low-income assistance programs, cost-effective energy efficiency and conservation activities, and public interest research and development.

This bill would require the PUC, by July 1, 2010, to develop and implement a strategy to expand the participation of multiunit residential and commercial rental properties in utility energy efficiency and solar energy programs and to prepare and submit a report on the program to the Legislature by that date. The bill would require the PUC to ensure that the strategy implemented does not result in any additional ratepayer surcharges, is funded through existing programs, and is cost effective for utility customers. The bill would require the PUC to consider, in developing the strategy, whether synergies exist between its energy efficiency programs and the solar energy programs of the California Solar Initiative, that, in the determination of the PUC, can make energy

efficiency and solar investments cost effective for utility customers in multiunit commercial and residential rental properties.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 2853 is added to the Public Utilities Code,
2 to read:
3 2853. (a) The Legislature finds and declares both of the
4 following:
5 (1) Owners of multiunit residential or commercial rental property
6 that are individually metered or master-metered have little financial
7 incentive to implement reasonable and cost-effective energy
8 efficiency improvements and solar energy projects.
9 (2) Forty-three percent of this state's residential housing units
10 are rented, indicating that many housing units and many
11 Californians are unable to benefit from this state's programs to
12 support energy efficiency and the use of solar energy.
13 (b) By July 1, 2010, the commission shall do both of the
14 following:
15 (1) Develop and implement a strategy to expand the participation
16 rates of multiunit residential and commercial rental properties in
17 utility energy efficiency and solar energy programs.
18 (2) Prepare and submit a report to the Legislature on the program
19 developed pursuant to paragraph (1).
20 (c) The commission shall ensure that the strategy developed
21 and implemented pursuant to subdivision (b) does not result in any
22 additional ratepayer surcharges and is funded through existing
23 utility energy efficiency programs and the California Solar
24 Initiative, as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 2852.
25 (d) The commission shall ensure that the strategy developed
26 and implemented pursuant to subdivision (b) is cost effective for
27 utility customers.
28 (e) The commission shall consider, in developing the strategy
29 pursuant to subdivision (b), whether synergies exist between its
30 energy efficiency programs and the solar energy programs of the
31 California Solar Initiative, including the low-income provisions
32 of the California Solar Initiative, that, in the determination of the
33 commission, can make energy efficiency and solar investments

- 1 cost effective for utility customers in multiunit residential or
- 2 commercial rental properties.

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